

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action of January 16, 2007, applicants ask that all claims be allowed in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-21 are pending, of which claims 1, 12, 19 and 21 are independent. Claims 1, 2, 12, 13, 19, and 20 have been amended, and claim 21 is new. Support for the amendments and the new claim may be found throughout the application, including, for example, Fig. 2 and pages 8-11 and 20 of the specification. No new matter has been introduced. Applicants request reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the amendments and the remarks below. Accordingly, applicants submit that all of the claims 1-21 are in condition for allowance.

Interview

As an initial matter, applicant would like to thank Examiners Ho and Truong for the courtesies extended to applicants' representatives during the personal interview on April 11, 2007. As shown by the Examiner's interview summary Form PTOL-413, the Examiners and applicants' representatives discussed a proposed claim amendment that was agreed to distinguish U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0028507 (Pauliks). Independent claims 1, 12, and 19 have been amended to reflect the proposed amendment, and distinguish Pauliks for reasons more fully described below. This reply reflects the substance of the interview.

Rejections of Claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 1-11 stand rejected as directed to non-statutory subject matter. In response, independent claim 1 was amended to replace the language "an information carrier" with "a machine readable-storage device." Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-11.

Rejections of Claims 1-6, 12-17, 19, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-6, 12-17, 19, and 20 stand rejected as being anticipated by Pauliks. Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection because Pauliks does not describe or suggest the subject matter of the independent claims 1, 12 and 19, as described more fully below.

Independent Claim 1 and Dependent Claims 2-6

Amended claim 1 recites a computer program product tangibly embodied in a machine readable-storage device. The computer program product includes instructions that, when executed, prioritize associations of products and business entities in a data collection. The computer program product is configured to receive information associating a particular product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection with a particular business entity identified in the data collection. The particular business entity is associated in the data collection with multiple data entries that each identify one or more product associations between one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity. Each of the multiple data entries has a priority indication associated therewith. The computer program product is also configured to store an indication of the received information associating the particular product in one or more of the multiple data entries in the data collection for use in determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity includes a higher priority indication, and for use in using a data entry of the multiple data entries that includes the higher priority indication to determine whether a product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection is associated with the particular business entity.

In contrast, Pauliks discloses “a method to describe and apply priorities to customer demands.” *See* Pauliks, paragraph [0011]. Pauliks’ method includes use of a “ruler” that applies general rules for assigning priorities to demands. *See Id.* The layout of the ruler database includes columns for due date, customer, type of demand, and priority. *See* Pauliks, Fig. 2 and paragraph [0012]. For each of these columns, there are three types of categories in which rules may be created and applied: explicit, hierarchy, and wildcard. In Pauliks, an “assigner” executes customer demands using the priority assignments based on the rules defined by the ruler. *See* Pauliks, paragraph [0014].

Pauliks does not describe or suggest “determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity includes a higher priority indication,” as recited in amended claim 1.

In particular, Pauliks ruler is directed to customer “demands,” and the type of demand may be a “forecast or actual order.” *See* Pauliks, paragraph [0012]. A forecast or actual order does not specify a type of product in a group of products, nor does the forecast or actual order specify product associations between a business entity and a particular product in a group of associated particular products. In fact, rather than specifying such associations, Pauliks simply associates a forecast or demand through the forecast or demand column of the ruler. *See Id.* As Pauliks does not describe or suggest one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity, Pauliks cannot describe or suggest the claim language of “determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity includes a higher priority indication,” as recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-6.

Independent Claims 12 and 19, and Dependent Claims 13-17 and 20

Independent claims 12 and 19 each recite determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity includes a higher priority indication, and claims 12 and 19 do so in the context of a computer-implemented method (claim 12) and a system (claim 19). Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 12 and 19 and their respective dependent claims 13-17 and 20.

Rejections of Claims 7, 8-11, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected claims 8-11 as unpatentable over Pauliks in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0187665 (Boyd). Each of claims 8-11 depend from independent claim 1. Boyd is cited by the action as disclosing the particular business entity indicates that the particular business entity is not permitted / permitted to sell / purchase a product identified by the one or more product associations. Boyd also fails to describe or suggest the “determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity includes a higher priority indication” as recited by amended claim 1. As such, Boyd does not remedy the failure of Pauliks to disclose the subject matter of independent claim 1. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8-11, which are dependent on amended claim 1.

The Office Action rejected claims 7 and 18 as unpatentable over Pauliks in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0221107 (Kang). Each of claims 7 and 18 depend from independent claims 1 and 12, respectively. Kang, which is cited by the action as disclosing the period of validity, also fails to describe or suggest the subject matter of independent claims 1 and 12. As such, Kang does not remedy the failure of Pauliks to disclose the subject matter of independent claims 1 and 12. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 7 and 18, which are dependent on amended claims 1 and 12, respectively.

New Claim 21

New claim 21 recites “determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity within the hierarchy relating business entities and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products within the hierarchy relating products and the particular business entity within the hierarchy relating business entities includes a higher priority indication,” and for the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1 is allowable over the applied references. In addition, neither Pauliks, nor the other references describe or suggest “at least one of the multiple

data entries associated with the particular business entity identifies either one or both of the particular business entity based on an association of the particular business entity with another business entity in the hierarchy relating business entities, or at least one of the product associations based on an association of the product with another product in the hierarchy relating products,” as recited by new claim 21. For these additional reasons, new claim 21 is allowable.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that pending claims 1-21 are in condition for allowance, and requests that the Examiner issue a notice of allowance.

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the remarks made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Applicant : Christiane Schauerte, et al.
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The excess claims fee in the amount of \$250 is being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply any charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gabriel D. Olander
Gabriel D. Olander
Reg. No. 59,185

Customer No.: 32864
Fish & Richardson P.C.
1425 K Street, N.W.
11th Floor
Washington, DC 20005-3500
Telephone: (202) 783-5070
Facsimile: (202) 783-2331

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